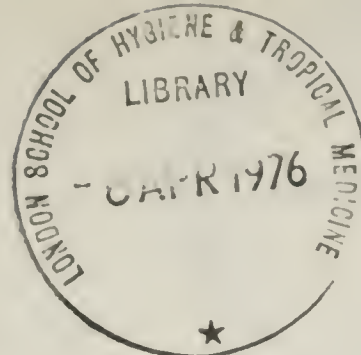


AC. 4411 (3)

II



WEST MERSE U. D. C.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

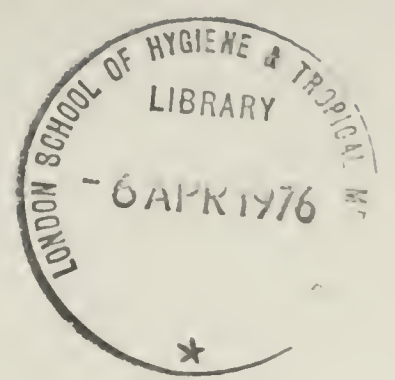
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1972





LEXDEN GRANGE

LEXDEN ROAD,

COLCHESTER.

November 1973

Mr. Chairman, Lady and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report  
on the Health and Vital Statistics of the District for  
the year 1972.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

SYLVIA MACMILLAN.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30262276>

W E S T    M E R S E A

U R B A N    D I S T R I C T    C O U N C I L

1 9 7 2

P U B L I C    H E A L T H    C O M M I T T E E

Councillor G. Day -- Chairman

Councillor R. D'Wit

Councillor C. S. Smith

Councillor A. Gray

Medical Officer of Health

SYLVIA MACMILLAN, M.R.S.C., L.R.C.P., M.B.B.S., D.P.H.

Public Health Inspector

L. BARBER, M.A.P.H.I., M.R.S.H.



# WEST MERSEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Area (acres) . . . . .	2683
Register General's estimate of resident population . . . .	4430
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1972) according to Rate Book . . . . .	1829
Rateable Value . . . . .	£170.886
Sum represented by a penny rate . . . . .	£1.708

## SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The district is the western portion of Mersea Island which lies between the estuaries of the rivers Blackwater and Colne. The nearest town is Colchester, situated about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the north.

As a summer health resort, it attracts a large number of holiday makers many of whom enjoy some excellent sailing.

The main industries are agriculture, fishing, building and yacht building.

## EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

	Total 1972
Live Births . . . . .	54
Legitimate . . . . .	51
Illegitimate . . . . .	3
Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population . . . .	12.2
Comparability Factor . . . . .	1.2
Corrected Birth Rate . . . . .	14.6
England and Wales . . . . .	14.8
Still Births . . . . .	0
Infant Deaths . . . . .	0
Infant Mortality rate per 1,000 births . . . . .	0
Infant Mortality Rate, England and Wales . . . . .	17
Perinatal mortality rate (still births plus deaths during 1st week per 1,000 total live and still births). .	0
Illegitimate live births (as percentage of total live births) . .	5.6%
Maternal deaths . . . . .	0
Maternal mortality rate . . . . .	0
Deaths . . . . .	59
Death rate per 1,000 resident population . . . . .	13.3
Corrected death rate . . . . .	8.9
England and Wales . . . . .	12.1
Comparability Factor . . . . .	0.74



## NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACTS, 1948 - 51

No action taken under these acts.

### GENERAL COMMENTS ON VITAL STATISTICS

The following table shows population in the district and birth and death rates compared with those in England and Wales over the last ten years.

<u>Birth Rate</u>			<u>Death Rate</u>		<u>Population</u>
<u>West Mersea-England &amp; Wales</u>			<u>West Mersea-England &amp; Wales</u>		
(corrected)			(corrected)		
1972	14.6	14.8	8.9	12.1	4430
1971	24.8	16.0	10.1	11.6	4140
1970	18.3	16.0	7.6	11.7	3980
1969	19.8	16.3	9.2	11.9	3840
1968	23.2	16.9	7.37	11.9	3740
1967	25.4	17.2	10.7	11.2	3580
1966	19.9	17.7	9.9	11.7	3430
1965	20.98	18.0	10.2	11.5	3320
1964	19.0	18.4	9.0	11.3	3250
1963	20.1	18.2	14.0	12.2	3160
1962	19.1	18.0	11.5	11.9	3110

It can be seen that the population has steadily increased since 1962 but that the rate of increase has become much more rapid during the last five years

The birth rate has dropped from 24.8 in 1971 to 14.6 in 1972. This Rate is lower than the National Birth Rate for the first time in twelve years.

The death rate in the district compares favourably with the national average. The rates are corrected for the age structure of the local population in order to make them comparable to the National Age Structure. In this connection we know from our "Area Comparability Factor" of 0.74 that we have a very large preponderance of elderly people and it is worth noting that over the ten year period this proportion of elderly has increased.

### NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Non Notified



## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

### Public Health Officers of the Local Authority

#### Medical Officer of Health

Sylvia MacMillan, M.R.S.C., L.R.C.P., M.B., B.S., D.P.H.,  
Part-time devoting the remainder of time to two neighbouring  
authorities and to the County Council

Public Health Inspector - L. Barber M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.  
Full time.. Also Surveyor to the Council

### Laboratory Facilities

The Laboratories available are situated at:-

The Essex County Hospital, Colchester  
The Public Health Laboratory, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich  
The Counties Laboratory, 66 Victoria Street, London S.W.1.

### Ambulance

Non-emergency ambulance calls are not accepted from the general public.

To obtain an ambulance in an emergency it is merely necessary to lift the telephone receiver and ask for an ambulance. If there is a dialling system in operation dial "999" or "0" or "01" and ask for an ambulance.

### Health Services provided by the Essex County Council

Ante-natal and post-natal clinics

Midwives

Nursing in the Home

Health Visiting

Vaccination and immunisation of diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, tuberculosis and German measles

Provision of nursing equipment and apparatus

School Health Services

Chiropody for the Elderly is held all day on the 4th Tuesday in the month at the Health Clinic, Barfield Road, West Mersea. Telephone 2590. Also domiciliary chiropody.

Relaxation and Mothercraft Classes are held at the County Health Services Clinic, Barfield Road, West Mersea. Relaxation on Wednesdays 10.15 a.m.

Mothercraft on Tuesdays 2.15 p.m.

Child Health Clinics are held at the County Health Services Clinic, Barfield Road, West Mersea every Wednesday at 2.15 p.m.

Innoculation Clinic is 1st Thursday every month in the morning by appointment.

Welfare Foods are obtainable from the Health Services Clinics only.

Cervical Cytology Clinic is held at the Central Clinic, East Lodge Court, High Street, Colchester at 9.30 a.m. every Thursday.

Assistance from the Home Help Services is obtained by communicating with Social Services Department, Park Road, Colchester, Tele: Colchester 79511

## Health Services Provided by the Regional Hospital Board

V.D. - Sessions held at the Essex County Hospital on  
Tuesdays 5 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. and Fridays  
10 to 11.30 a.m.

### Family Planning - Family Planning Association:-

Essex County Hospital, Monday and Thursdays  
6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. Tele: Colchester 76257

Monkwick Health Services Clinic, Tuesdays  
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

IUD Clinics Wednesdays a.m. (by Appointment)

IUD Clinics 1st and 3rd Fridays a.m. (by  
appointment) Tele: Colchester 78571

Tiptree Health Services Clinic, 1st and 3rd  
Thursdays 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tele: Tiptree 6475

### Meals on Wheels

The West Mersea Kitchen opened in April 1972. Throughout the year approximately 25 meals were served and delivered to elderly people twice a week. The recipients of these meals have been very satisfied with the excellence of the cooking and the variety of menus. A tribute should be paid to the devoted work of the voluntary team who deliver the meals.

W E S T     M E R S E A     U . D . C .

A N N U A L     R E P O R T

Mr. Chairman, Lady & Gentlemen,

It is with some regret that I write my first and also my last Annual Report for your perusal and information.

The Environmental scene in Mersea is complex and the picture is not helped by the fact that many people confuse the phrases "the environment" and "environmental health". Emotions and feelings flood over as often does The Strood and objective judgements become difficult to find.

Nonetheless I feel that improvements in the Environmental Health sphere are being slowly but steadily secured and the rate of improvement is perceptibly accelerating.

Housing is an area where improvements show quite rapidly and after a rather sticky beginning we can now point to a few of our successes. Housing Improvement Grants - long ignored in West Mersea - have now become a normal and accepted feature of the department's work. In the past ten months some eighteen private houses and nine council houses have benefited and the remainder of the pre-war council housing stock should soon be fully modernised.

Council houses are once again being built and the future looks even brighter for prospective council house tenants in Mersea.

Being a sea-side resort with a comparatively large influx of holiday makers and day visitors we have a fairly high danger potential on the Food Hygiene front. Many improvements secured over the last twelve months have, we hope, made Mersea a safer place to visit.

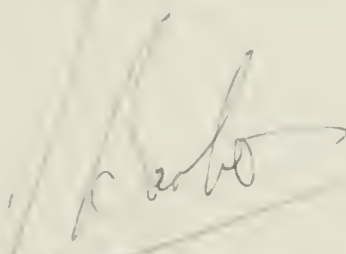
Drainage both foul and surface water has been and is being improved quite rapidly and we look to the day in the very near future when only fully treated effluents go down to the sea.

In all, I feel the year has been one of innovation and good solid achievement, producing increasing benefits to this beautiful little Island.

I would especially like to thank members for their forbearance of a "new boy" with new and perhaps even strange ideas and my long suffering staff for their help and courage in bringing the ideas to fruition.

I have the honour to be "

Your obedient servant

  
Chief Public Health Inspector/Surveyor





## HOUSING

During 1972 the Local Authority recommenced its own house building programme with a small development of six bungalows on one site and an individual bungalow on an infill site.

The first steps were also taken towards the ultimate demolition of twelve old council houses for the redevelopment of this comparatively large site to provide twenty-seven units of wardened accommodation and twenty-six no. five person houses. This would easily be the largest single housing programme undertaken by the Authority.

At the time of writing all the necessary permissions have been granted and it is hoped that work will commence early in 1974.

West Mersea is a town of contrasts in the housing field, varying from the picturesque but barely habitable to the ultra-modern and barely livable with. Whilst little can be done about the latter my Council in 1972 decided to help the former by offering Improvement Grants for the first time. Twenty seven houses have so far benefited by this decision and others are in the pipe line.

As this will almost certainly be my last report all the statistics which are given cover the period 1st January 1972 to 31st October 1973.

Number of Council dwellings built in the period	7
---	---

Number of Private dwellings built in the period	160
---	-----

Number of dwellings for which Planning Permission has been obtained but not yet built

Council	53
---------	----

Private	350
---------	-----

## FOOD HYGIENE

The standard of shops in Mersea follows closely that of the housing stock and once again the need for some action was very obvious from the time of my arrival.

As a result of visits, advice, persuasion and occasionally downright blackmail a number of significant improvements have been made and facilities generally are now better than before.

In some cases only relatively minor improvements have been possible on structural or economic grounds. In the long term this may prove to be a blessing as Planning Permissions have been granted for modern precinct type shops which are slowly replacing the older more picturesque but less efficient shops of today. All "improvements" have their denigrators but good design and imaginative planning should result in equally aesthetically pleasing modern buildings in keeping with the West Mersea scene. No sampling was carried out in the District during the year.

We have no slaughterhouses in the District.

Number of food shops	16
Number of fried fish shops	1
Number of licensed houses	13
Number of cafes or restaurants	9
Number of butchers shops	3
Premises registered for sale of ice cream	12
Premises registered for manufacture of meat products	2

# PEST CONTROL

I set out below the return on Rodent Control activities during 1972 as sent to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Nonetheless the incidence of complaints leads one to the conclusion that the infestation problem is not great and the sewers - a notable indicator of infestation - are almost completely free of rats.

Minor problems concerning insect infestations arise from time to time and we have to deal with such items as wasps nests, ants of various kinds and our old and prolific enemy the clover mite.



OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAY PREMISES ACT

I set out below the Annual Return for 1972 as required under the Act.

All the premises have been visited and a few minor infractions of the law have been raised with the owners of Registered Premises.

Once again the problem of how far to go on premises with a relatively short life raises its ugly head and presents a neat balancing task as one weights the short and long term public good against the economics of the possible solutions.

	Number of premises newly registered during the year	Total number of registered premises at end of year	Number of registered premises receiving one or more general inspections during the year
Offices	1	8	8
Retail Shops		41	41
Wholesale shops, warehouses		-	-
Catering establishments open to the public, canteens		7	7
Fuel Storage Depots		3	3
TOTALS	1	59	59

## FACTORIES ACT

West Mersea has no heavy industry nor has it any really large employers of labour. The industry of the Town revolves around its basic needs and recreations - namely the building industry, motor vehicle repairers and yachting.

No problems have become apparent during the year which required action under this particular Act.

Number of mechanical Factories	10
Number of visits	25
Number of Non-Mechanical Factories	1
Number of Visits	3

## AIR POLLUTION

Mersea is in a very favourable position geographically to avoid pollution from the large industrial conurbations of the country.

Domestic and commercial heating is based on electricity, oil and solid fuel of one sort or another. There is no mains gas service to the Island.

No accurate figures are yet available but on random surveys it would appear that 70% or more of the space heating is produced by approved central heating units using approved fuels which means that air pollution from local sources is also minimal.

Other types of pollution do exist however and from time to time we receive complaints of excessive noise emanations in particular.

Each case is carefully investigated and remedial measures are suggested where necessary. A proportion of these complaints prove to be "one day wonders" and have stopped before we investigate - indeed in some cases even before we get the complaint.

## SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Of recent years the Local Authority have spent considerable sums of money on improving and replacing the foul sewerage system within the Urban District. Unfortunately developments at the Sewage Disposal Works and in the Surface Water Sewers has not kept pace with the Town development.

As a result of the piecemeal provision for surface water drainage of the Town the Council decided that a master plan must be produced and that developers should strictly adhere to its provisions. Some existing sewers would have to be enlarged at the Local Authority's expense but basically a sound and extendable service would result.

We are now working to this plan and are seeking Government permission to carry out our part of the work which cannot be included in road improvement schemes.

The sewage disposal works are simply settling tanks with pre-screening of crude sewage. The resultant effluent is then discharged into the Blackwater below Low Water Mark. The efficiency of this system depends almost entirely on the holding or settling time available to the sewage flow which in turn is entirely dependent on the rate of inflow to the works.

The state of the resultant effluent is therefore very much like marriage. Its condition can only be determined for one specific example and can be widely different - for better or for worse - in any others you care to study.

The flow recording instrument gave up the ghost some years ago. After eight months of valiant effort we can get no firm date for installation of a new one so our knowledge of present flow rates is based entirely on estimates and educated guesses.

Despite - and probably because of this state of affairs my Council have commissioned a complete modernisation scheme for the works at a cost of some £325,000 and we are at this moment awaiting approval from the appropriate Government Departments to go out to tender.





## REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Refuse Collection in the District was achieved by using a crew of four men in winter and five in summer. The vehicle is a Ford Norba of about 14 cubic yards nominal capacity. The screw compacting gear increases the capacity by 50 - 100% depending on the type of refuse collected.

By and large the system worked but the frequency of collection varied between seven and ten days and it had one glaring fault. Skip collection. The bin - or its substitute -- was emptied into a large skip which had to be carried empty to the house and when filled had to be returned to the vehicle to empty. This was normally a two man job and the wastage of labour is immediately apparent.

The opportunities for dispensing dust and waste paper around the pleasant landscape of Mersea is also, I think, a noticeable feature of this system.

As a result of long and often arduous discussions by Committees; with Trade Unions; with the men; with manufacturers and with Government Departments, my Council finally got all round approval for an updated and twentieth century form of refuse storage and collection.

The scheme has two central and interconnected points. An incentive bonus scheme for the men and the use of plastic sacks as bin liners by our residents. The scheme was endangered by yet another world shortage - this time of plastic sheet. Fortunately we placed large orders and took delivery before the worst of the shortage and its associated price rises bit too hard.

Householder acceptance was almost immediate and our pre-introduction publicity therefore was shown to be successful. Then workmen, after initial doubts now appear to be quite happy and are indeed strong proponents of the system.